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## EDITORIAL COMMENT

Dr. Lippman's article, "Emotional Problems Presented by the Child in the School Setting," is the first of two to be published in the *Bulletin*. The second, will be centered around help with parents in relation to the emotional problems which the child presents in school. In addition to identifying the children who come to the attention of the school social worker, he gives data helpful in diagnosing behavior of a neurotic nature. His article contains material gained from long and close association with schools and with school social workers; it should be most helpful to all school personnel.

The contribution of the school to the child's growth and development is often lost sight of by the public. School personnel are increasingly aware of the value of a happy school experience towards the child's psychological development. Dr. Smalley, in "The Philosophy and Objectives of Adjustment Services as Expressed in Practice," emphasizes the principle of growth and the growth opportunities the school affords. The school social worker is invaluable in helping the child whose interpersonal relationships are faulty. Thus the child is helped to achieve for himself growth which is necessary in furthering the development of personality.

Mrs. Harland, in "An Interpretation of the Visiting Counselor Service to New Teachers," has written a composite of her presentation to new teachers in three successive years. Her yearly talk to new teachers, some new to the profession, is given during one of the orientation sessions prior to the opening of the school term. Interpretation of school social work to school personnel is one of the most important tasks of the school social worker. Although interpretation is a continuous process and is done in many different ways, there are occasions when it is done through formal talks.

## EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS PRESENTED BY THE CHILD IN THE SCHOOL SETTING<sup>1</sup>

HYMAN S. LIPPMAN, M.D., Amherst H. Wilder Child Guidance Clinic  
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This discussion will deal with problems of an emotional nature met by the school social worker in her every day work. They have come to our attention in the child guidance clinic through referral of children by the school social worker, the school personnel, social agencies, physicians, and the children's parents. The problems vary from those that merely create a nuisance to those of a most severe neurotic nature. No attempt will be made to deal with any one of them thoroughly since most of them are in themselves subjects for detailed discussion.

As school social workers you are concerned with the total adjustment of the child, primarily as this is affected by the school but also by other environments, particularly the home. You are also concerned with the school itself. You want the school to be strong and a powerful tool in the preparation for life of the children it serves. In this double function you stand in an excellent position to help the school understand the many influences outside the school that currently affect the work of the children. You are also able to point out to the community ways in which the school can be improved, unmet needs in the school which the community must provide in the interests of its children. The school has learned to accept any criticisms you make as constructive, since your goals and theirs are the same.

I was very much impressed with the demands made by school personnel in a special session of their group at the 1950 White House Conference for Children in a Democracy. The discussion dealt with the emotional welfare of the school child and the recommendations decided upon reflected the interest and deep concern which educators felt for the emotional well being of the school children.

These problems group themselves around:

1. The child. 2. The parents. 3. The social agencies. 4. The school. The material of this article concerns itself primarily with the problems grouped around the child himself. One which stands out above the others

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<sup>1</sup> This was presented in a seminar to the school social workers of the State of Minnesota on October 24, 1952.

is the problem of the child's failure in his school work. Educators have dealt with this problem exhaustively. They have made many changes in the material taught and the returns demanded. They have divided classes into sections, developed special classes and have stimulated interest in many ways. They have had the best results when it was possible to deal adequately with the individual needs of the child. The results have been poorest when the classes were so large that the individual child's needs could not even be approximated.

When we speak of school failure, we refer to the unusual child, the one who for many reasons cannot go along with the average ones in his group. As social workers you know that many of the children who fail come from homes where neglect, lack of affection, lack of rest or proper nourishment make it difficult for a child to work with his studies. As educators you know that many children who fail are too dull to comprehend what they are given to learn and this is independent of emotional and physical factors that cause dullness. Since there are many different causes for children's failures in school work and these are often due to multiple factors, it is important that the reason or reasons for each particular child's failure be recognized and treated. Many of the causes will be easily recognized and you will be in a position to do something to eliminate them. Whenever your study of a given child fails to satisfy you that you understand why he has failed, or you are unable to modify causative factors, it is important that you enlist the help of appropriate social agencies in the community. Frequently the school decides that it is to the best interests of a young child to be held back in one of the early grades, based on the child's lack of knowledge of needed basic fundamentals or an immaturity that will penalize him if allowed to continue. In spite of the correctness of such decisions for many children we in the child guidance clinic often work with parents who because of their own early life experiences are so threatened by their child's being held back or failing, that the gains which the school hopes to achieve are nullified. The plan to fail such a child is contraindicated because of the devastating effect this has on the parents, with its ensuing chronic unhappiness and tension in the child's home setting.

School failure may play an important part in the child's developing a lack of confidence, feeling of inadequacy, and need to rebel. It may precipitate an increased rejection of him within the home, ridicule from the parents and siblings which provide impetus to punish others. Many of our most severe delinquencies are nurtured by a deep feeling of

inadequacy and failure which at least in part owe their origin to early school failure.

Truancy is often the result of failure, especially when failure causes shame and disgrace or when the child feels or is rejected by his classmates or teachers. It is a logical way of escaping from an unhappy situation. Often it is one of the evidences of delinquency already in progress. Such a child may take his school responsibility lightly, as he does the other demands made upon him. He has learned to avoid paying the penalty for dissocial behavior in his home and has brought this behavior with him into the school experience.

An unsocialized child will need a very different approach than the one who becomes truant in order to get even with parents who have abused him, or one who becomes truant to carry out a compulsive act of stealing over which he has little control. You will see the complexity of the factors involved in the dissocial act of truancy as in other delinquencies and a need for detailed study of chronic truants.

The child who is aggressive makes life difficult for the teacher and the other children. If unchecked, he sets an example of conduct that is contagious. Frequently aggression is a reflection of unrest due to inability to do the work of his grade. When the cause is as simple as this, it can be quickly recognized and hopefully corrective measures can be instituted. When the aggression represents a need for attention, the reason for this need must be discovered in the school, the neighborhood, or the home. When the cause is spotted and treated, the number of "clowns", "show-offs" and "general nuisances" lessens.

In those instances when the aggression is hostile in character you may be sure the child has been deeply hurt and has been displacing his feelings onto the school situation. He brings to the school a need to get even, to make others suffer as he has. You must learn to recognize these hostile children early, by the repetitiveness of their behavior, the cruelty of their attacks, and the strength of their anger and bitterness. They need a good deal of study and treatment before the underlying factors are understood. As might be expected, they come from homes where their parents are hostile, and often contemptuous of social services. These are situations that try your patience, but are often the most rewarding.

Hostile aggression cannot be tolerated in a classroom, much as it may be the logical reaction of a frustrated child. We must assume that the child has learned to avoid reacting with hostile aggression, if he is

to continue in the school program. It is important to quickly learn what factors are producing the aggression and remove them, or the child must be removed. So long as the child feels intolerable behavior is acceptable, he is likely to continue with it. Any attempts to deal patiently with an aggressive, destructive child will have to be made after the child is removed from the usual school setting.

It is well to keep in mind that many children are too weak in ego structure to control their aggression, and although they may object to firm measures, they may be greatly relieved if their aggression is blocked by someone stronger than they.

The problem of lack of motivation in the child to do his school work is one which is often baffling. It is well to keep in mind that school attendance is the work day for the child, and work is rarely pleasant. In the main a child is motivated for school work if there is someone in his home who loves him and whom he loves who is eager for him to do well in his school work. This helps to explain the lack of good work habits or interest in the child who is neglected or rejected. It is interesting to notice the development of motivation for school work when a neglected child is given special consideration by a teacher or tutor. We often credit the improvement in work habits to the subject matter taught by a tutor, whereas the child has been helped to want to learn by the relationship established to a giving adult. It is always amazing to a tutor or any therapist to learn that he is the first person who really deeply accepted a given child without reservation, that for the first time in the child's life he has found a person to whom it is safe to relate, to give of himself. In so many instances his failure to learn was based on a rejection and distrust of those who have tried to teach him.

Many children who do not concentrate on school work or who are unmotivated to do school work are even unable to want to learn because of complex factors in their relationship to neurotic conflicted parents. The important fact for you to keep in mind is that the lack of motivation to learn in a child who has adequate intellectual capacity usually reflects tension, conflict and unhappiness. As school social workers you will often be in a good position to recognize this tension early and may be able to check the underlying causes before they become established as character traits. You will find many instances in which early removal of a child from a home setting that can only perpetuate suffering will be the method of choice to solve the problem. Removal from a child's

home is the last resort after all other methods of casework have failed; it can be a life saving measure that should not be overlooked.

Finally, I would like to discuss the problem of neurotic illness and conflict in the child. This presents an important problem in diagnosis as well as treatment, and emphasizes the need of a thorough knowledge of the dynamics of human behavior. Without a knowledge of the unconscious psychological factors responsible for neurotic suffering, it is difficult to work understandingly with the emotionally disturbed child. We have learned that the withdrawn passive child is often sicker and more needful than the one who is a troublemaker. We are a long way from finding a technique that will help the neurotic child to realize the importance of discussing his anxieties with adults who are able to help him. Unfortunately the deep anxiety extends into his relationship with adults with the result that he is too often anxious and distrustful of them. It is difficult for the child, and often for the parents also, not to feel that the young neurotic child will outgrow his difficulties with the result that an opportunity is lost to early change the conditions which are responsible for neurotic conflict.

The most useful guide for determining neurotic involvement is the presence of anxiety. Those children who are obviously neurotic demonstrate their anxieties in attacks of panic, fear of the teacher and other children, fear of failure or phobias so marked as to make school attendance impossible. The anxiety may be manifested by fainting attacks or other somatic symptoms such as functional headache, soiling or stuttering. In many instances the anxiety is masked behind such symptoms as lack of motivation in school work, inhibited or blocked aggression, avoidance of companions, excessive fantasizing or perfectionism. It is probably safe to assume that whenever behavior cannot be explained by a thorough study of situations in and about the home and the school, the problem is of a neurotic nature. Further study may reveal that factors of a non-neurotic nature have been overlooked in which case the diagnosis can be changed. When a tentative diagnosis of neurosis is made and manipulation of the environment fails to get results, psychiatric study and treatment is necessary. It is largely for such children that a child guidance clinic is maintained. Our staff at the Clinic is made up of people trained in psychiatric social work, clinical psychology, and psychiatry, to which recently has been added psychiatric group therapy. A child guidance clinic offers to the community a facility for a detailed study of the total child in such a way that an accurate diagnosis is possible. Opportunities are provided for psychotherapy which varies from

brief psychotherapy to long time intensive treatment of both child and parent. The child guidance clinic does not limit its treatment to the withdrawn neurotic child. It concerns itself with any abnormal behavior in the child which is created by emotional conflict. This includes difficulties in learning, character and personality deviations, and delinquency based on emotional conflict.

These remarks obviously do not include all of the emotional problems manifested in the school child. They were chosen as the ones which most frequently come to our attention in psychiatric work with children.

# THE PHILOSOPHY AND OBJECTIVES OF ADJUSTMENT SERVICES AS EXPRESSED IN PRACTICE<sup>1</sup>

by

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The philosophy of adjustment services in the public schools, as I understand such services, is the philosophy of growth. Their objective is to further growth in children whose school behavior suggests failure to grow, specifically failure to use for their own growth and development the experiences the school provides. Such failure, whether it is expressed in achievement below the child's capacity to learn, in withdrawal from the give and take of relationships with other children and with teachers, in absence without cause, or in aggressive attack of one kind or another, defeats both the purpose of the school and the purpose of the child in attending it. I would like to consider in some little detail what I mean by a philosophy of growth; how growth takes place; what can interfere with it; and how adjustment services in a public school can further it for children in the immediacy of their school experience.<sup>2</sup>

A philosophy of growth is a philosophy of life. Growth can be viewed wherever it occurs only with wonder and appreciation for the life principle that compels it. We watch a tree in early spring, dark and stiff in all of its branches, soften, lighten, become flexible, put out swelling, buds, leaves, transform itself in the span of a few weeks. We know that the life principle was active in it through all the seeming death of

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<sup>1</sup> Presented at the WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA EDUCATION CONFERENCE, section on "Pupil Adjustment and Attendance Service," October 10, 1952.

<sup>2</sup> When I refer to adjustment services, I mean services to individual children having difficulty in school, the purpose of which is to help them resolve those difficulties primarily through their use of interviews or conferences with a member of the school faculty who is variously known as a visiting teacher, school counselor, home and school visitor, or school social worker. Many states are working toward a preferred training or professional preparation of such a faculty member, which is in social casework. It is available in a two year program at the graduate level in some sixty Schools of Social Work affiliated with Universities throughout the country.

In this paper I shall refer to the person who offers this particular kind of adjustment service as a counselor, or school counselor, because that is what he is called in the area in which I am employed. In the Pittsburgh area his title is Home and School Visitor.

winter, waiting until conditions should be right for its fulfillment as a tree in summer. Succeeding summers will see it accomplish itself anew, each time with increase in size and complexity until at long last it has spent itself as a tree and returns to nourish the earth that bore it.

So it is with human life. Growth begins for the individual human being from the moment of the implantation of the fertilized ovum, no larger than the head of a pin, in the uterine wall. Some of us have been fortunate enough to watch projected on a screen the very first division and subsequent sub-division of a single animal ovum. There can be little to match the awe and reverence that attend the sight of the quiver of the single cell followed by a second of confusion, disorganization, then new organization of more cells in definite arrangement, a period of waiting and seeming inactivity, a second quiver, disorganization, followed by new organization yet more complicated. And so it goes in accordance with the laws peculiar to its species, yet specific in tempo and quality of movement to this one individual of the species, accomplishing through an orderly step-by-step process, the destiny of its own fulfillment. To achieve its end of physiological growth and development the human being needs, as embryo, close physical relationship with another human being, the mother, indeed cannot survive outside her body. Yet, because of the endogenous urge to create structure necessary for its eventual separate existence, how different it is from a true parasite! The moment comes when, for the life of both mother and child, that separate existence must be achieved, physiologically, through birth, just as over the years toward adulthood, for the life of the spirit, it must be achieved psychologically. An infant, at birth, at the very beginning of life as a separate individual, is old in physiological wisdom. He has known growth and change within himself from single cell to the two-billion cells of the new born babe. He has experienced that growth as a requirement of his own nature; he has achieved it without intervention; he has taken from another blood nourishment to accomplish his own growth; he has needed and used the conditions of the body that constituted his first "environment"; he has put out onto and into that body excretions no longer necessary to himself. In the words of a famous embryologist he has been organizing and operating himself. "Even in his earliest weeks he faces, unconsciously, the unending problem of getting along in his world. Life," continues Dr. Corner, "is a paradoxical career in which the individual must both accept and contend with his environment, at once struggling for independence and adapting himself to cooperation. Before birth this effort and adjustment are a matter of physiology alone. Only later is the struggle complicated by problems of mentality and

social custom and by those workings of the spirit through which a man must pilot his individual life to success or failure in his community, to achievement or martyrdom, to turmoil or inward peace.”<sup>3</sup>

I have spoken in this detail of growth as it occurs in embryological life to make the point of its essential nature which is that it is characterized by continuity, by disorganization followed by reorganization, by use of the environment to achieve itself, and most significant of all, by accomplishment through an inner necessity which ceases only with death.

Now we can take a broad leap and meet our school children—born, nourished, weaned, trained, and presently sitting, shining faced or otherwise, in school. Yes, their environment in the person of their relatives—parents, brothers, sisters, playmates; and in its manifestation in culture, customs, neighborhood has been active indeed, acting upon each dynamo to forbid it this way or urge it that, but how active has the dynamo itself been, seeking, taking, refusing, using what it found in its environment in the never ending task of each of us—the creation of ourselves.

What, now, are the school experiences which can further growth begun so long before attendance at school, and what can interfere with it? The school makes available instruction in certain skills which lead to literacy. True, it is necessary in a democratic society that every child learn to read, write, and figure, and appreciate the past and the present of his kind and his culture, in order to participate in the creation of its present and future. That is society’s purpose and society’s stake in his going to school at all. His own stake is that the acquiring of these skills, knowledges, and values, can increase his capacity to get along in the world and further his sense of self, his self esteem, his self confidence; in fact he can use his learning to become more of a self, able to do more with his faculties of mind and body. In this way, in a very real sense, he can use school for growth and it is in his nature to do that, just as it was in the nature of the fertilized ovum that he once was, not to stay a single ovum, or revert to being part of an ovum, but to become an embryo, then a fetus, and finally to get born.

Yet, just as it is the child’s nature to learn, to make use of the new fact, the new experience, so is it also in his nature to refuse it and struggle against it because it upsets the apple cart of what he is and knows, and requires new self organization. This need not discourage

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<sup>3</sup> Corner, George W., “Ourselves Unborn”. New Haven, Conn., Yale University Press, 1944.

his teachers if they appreciate the "struggle against" as part and condition of the eventual integration into a new whole of knowing and being.

A second opportunity for every child's growth in a public school is the association with his fellows which it provides—an association from which he cannot escape some six hours of every day for approximately twelve school years. Growth on a psychological level requires for its accomplishment human relationships, just as surely as growth on a physiological level requires food and water. Every child who comes to school has, by that time, evolved his own pattern of relationship through what he has done with mother, father, brothers and sisters. Love and hate he already knows in himself and in others, and love and hate he both expresses and precipitates in others, in his own individual way. Here in school is a place to love and to hate, to grow—partly through becoming like what one loves, different from what one hates, through disposing of the parts of the self one won't have by leaving them behind in the person of former friends and teachers. Again, it is the child's very nature to use the relationships he finds in school with children and with teachers to accomplish his own growth, just as he is in turn used by them in *their* growing. The fact of relationship is as old for him, as his mother and father's part in creating him, as old as his union with his mother as part of her body. But equally old and equally strong is the urge to separate, to become an individual, to find the selfhood that is different from that of any other living creature.

A third opportunity for growth, in the public school, is the chance to come to grips with and do something about the limits in social requirements. The sturdy, developing, separate yet related self that is each child has never from the very first been able to have things all his own way. He did not choose when he would be born or even whether he would be born, to what parents, of what race, with what physique and degree of intelligence. But far from meaning that he is, therefore, nothing but the result of a series of accidents, this is only to say that he was given something unique to work with from the very start. How will he use his "given," the fact of his existence, his specific endowment? The changing conditions in himself and in his environment? What will he do with what cannot be changed? The child who meets the limits in school, the limits in compulsory attendance, in following a prescribed curriculum, in remaining with a certain teacher, in doing a specified quality of work in order to pass on to the next grade, is engaged once more in accepting and contending with his environment, just as he has been from the moment of his conception. What will he do with the

changing, and with the unchangeable, whether he finds it inside or outside of himself? Will he spend his energies in opposing what cannot be changed or will he use it to create the kind of self he elects to be?

It is in his nature both to fight the "limit," as restricting the free expression of himself, and to welcome it—as an opportunity for testing himself against it. Unless there is a goal line to be crossed, how can the football player experience making a touchdown? Limits let the child know what he has to work with, and within, and so give form to his creativity which might otherwise lie dormant for lack of challenge—or spend itself in aimless undirected bursts of energy.

So much for the growth opportunities the school affords, of 1, instruction leading to skill and knowledge and a greater sense of self; 2, experience in human relationships leading to a social, human responsive self; 3, experience with limits in the form of school requirements, leading to the capacity to be "creative within a pattern", to be an individual who is a responsible part of a larger whole. All of these experiences are growth opportunities, grist for the mill of each young miller. Now what can cause the child's failure to use such opportunities for growth, when it is so much his nature to grow?

There can be a doubt of himself and of his own capacities which interferes with his putting forth effort to learn because of a fear of failure. Better not to try than to try and find one can't! This may have been encouraged by years of too high expectations for him, or by too much doing for him so that he had no chance to discover his own competence and fears to put it to the test. There can be so much antagonism to a parent that a child chooses to do what would hurt that parent most, perhaps fail in school, as a way of getting even for a lack of love or for hurtful, even though well meant interference with his development. There can be difficulty in trusting people enough to be friends with them or, in the case of teachers, to learn from them, because of profound disappointment in adults who were trusted and who failed that trust. There can be suspicion of and hostility to a certain race or to one of the sexes out of a feeling of likeness to a loved parent who carries that suspicion or hatred. There can be an opposition to anything that feels like a limit because limits have been too many and too harshly enforced so that, in order to maintain any "selfhood" at all the outside must be opposed, resisted, defeated. Or there can be an equally great resistance to limits (a necessary part of all social living) because they have been too lightly or too inconsistently represented by the persons responsible

for the child's early rearing. Experiences the child has had before he came to school can certainly affect the way he uses or fails to use the school for growth, but they cannot, save in the rarest instances, destroy his potential for growth, his urge to grow, indeed his necessity to grow. It is with that ineluctable urge that the school and the school counselor must ally themselves. Too often the school and its personnel feel themselves at odds with the child's essential nature, with the school on one end of the line, the child on the other and a tug-of-war resulting. The school experience has the greatest chance to being productive when the teacher, and all of the school personnel, feel themselves the child's partners in his own growth. True, a teacher must often represent what part of a child does not like, opposes and resists, but she can always count on another and the essential part of him which wants exactly what she and the school as a whole want—his own growth and development.

What needs to be appreciated is that psychological growth like biological growth is "natural"—that is it is in accord with a natural law, but it is not accomplished in a straight line, it is not pure evolving. It is attended by struggle marked by ambivalence and accomplished by effort. This is true both because of influences in the life of the child which operate against as well as with growth, and because of the very nature of growth as I have attempted to describe it.

It is the task of the school counselor, who offers an adjustment service, to discover with the child and with the school, what is interfering with a child's use of school for his own growth, and to make available a human relationship with her, a representative of the school with which he is having trouble, which he can use to find and to test out his own positive wanting of and capacity for growth and development. This calls for a series of interviews between counselor and child through which a relationship of significance can develop. It calls for interviews with his parents who may be able to find through a relationship with the school counselor a way of being more helpful parents of a child-in-school. It may call for a referral of parents or child to some social agency or resource in the community, which can relieve pressures or offer service, thus lifting a burden from the child so that his own growth can continue. Always it means work with the teacher for a mutual discovery and affirmation of the separate and valued part of both teacher and counselor in furthering the child's growth.

Perhaps what I have presented so sketchily and theoretically may have more meaning if I illustrate, with a brief example from practice,

how one child used a relationship with a school counselor to find and assume his responsibility for his own growth and development in school.

Morris Mann is a student in the 9B grade of a junior high school. He is fifteen years old and has an I. Q. of 124 on a group verbal abilities test. Until he entered the 9th grade he was an excellent student, but when he came to the counselor he was clowning in the classroom and failing in Latin. He made an appointment with the counselor to request that he be allowed to take two additional periods of shop each week and use shop as a major instead of Latin. An appointment was made with him to discuss that problem.

It is significant to note that an appointment was made with Morris to discuss the problem he presented. This fact in itself connotes a recognition of his value as a person, dignifies the problem he feels, proposes to resolve it not arbitrarily and without consideration for his wishes and feeling, but through a process in which he will have a vital part. It does not mean that he will control the way it will be, but it does mean that he will be required to participate in the solution of a problem which is one he feels and brings. In this fact alone his responsibility for himself is recognized and a condition of growth established in the chance for him to be participant and actor in life, not merely observer, and recipient of an "outside" fate.

When Morris came to my office he went to a chair by the wall, some distance from my desk. He sat down, and looking straight ahead, waited. I remembered the reason for our meeting and wondered why Morris desired this unusual arrangement.

Morris' sitting as far as possible from the counselor's desk is indicative of the distance he feels and wants from the person in authority. This boy is going through a period of adolescent development when his way of achieving psychological separation from his parents may be reflected in his physical withdrawal from them and from persons he identifies with them and in his refusal to meet standards he has come to feel are theirs for him rather than his for himself. His impulse towards separation is healthy and in the direction of growth. His way of achieving that separation is presently operating against his growth and what he truly wants for himself. He is so busy being "against" that he has not taken time to discover what he is "for". Morris' waiting for the counselor to speak is indicative of a lack of trust in himself and of the part he can play in controlling or at least having a part in what happens to him. He seems to be steeling himself and waiting for the axe to fall.

The counselor will not have it that way and in recalling the reason for the meeting asks a question which precipitates Morris into activity on his own behalf. He must take responsibility for his request to change from Latin to shop and let the counselor know the reason for it. In this very beginning with the counselor, Morris is not permitted to be the passive, "little" one who can differentiate himself from powerful adults only by opposing them, however futilely. He is expected and required to behave like the fifteen-year-old he is, to clarify what he wants in his school experience, and why he wants it.

Morris said that he knew he was putting the noose around his neck when he came here; no, he was just pulling the rope, since the noose was already there. It seemed to me that he must have felt that he was really killing himself when he came here. He assured me that that was *exactly* the way he felt. I thought he must be very afraid of me and that was so. I thought there must be a reason for this and Morris reminded me that I had seen him in Dr. Smith's (principal) office some time ago after the principal had sent for his mother to discuss rostering Morris to remedial gym. I would probably tell him this too and he would call his mother and this time his mother would tell his father. He is in enough trouble with his father.

I could understand that he must be pretty fearful about what would happen here because I remembered that the experience of which he spoke had been unpleasant. I explained that there are some ways in which this is different. He came yesterday to ask for help. I explained how the counseling service operates, how we would work together and wondered if he felt that he really could use the service.

When Morris is encouraged to speak to a person whose attitude toward him is both respectful and well disposed, about the problem which has brought him to the counselor's office, he brings out his fear of the powerful adult. This fear is neither minimized nor denied by the counselor; instead Morris is enabled to feel it more fully, "It seemed to me that he must have felt he was really killing himself when he came here." And later, "I thought he must be very afraid of me." If Morris is to be helped through this relationship, he must be able to trust the counselor. This results, in part, from having his own feelings (in this case, his fear) understood and accepted. Having got that fear out in words, he may be free of it sufficiently that he can think and act with less tension and need to bluff or shrink away because of denied, but deeply felt panic. The counselor helps him with the understandable fear of the situation in which he has put himself by encouraging Morris not only to express his fear but, (1) to locate its origin in the school situation (last time you saw me my parents were sent for, will that happen again?) and (2) to recognize that this is a different situation.

When Morris can separate these two situations he need not feel so totally in this meeting what he felt on another occasion. This time he asked for help; he is not the helpless recipient of others' activity in relation to him. The deeper fear Morris feels for adults is not handled directly, but his successful achieving of a relationship with this adult in itself minimizes and overcomes that basic fear, growing, in part, out of earlier life experiences. The best way to overcome a bad old experience is to have a good new experience. How well we understand this principle of "overcoming" through experience, as, for example, in the instance of falling in love again after a disastrous encounter in that area, or getting on a horse and riding after being thrown so that the fall will not forever incapacitate us for riding again.

The counselor described "how the counseling service operates, how we would work together, and wondered if he felt he really could use the service." Notice how there is no assumption that Morris *will* use the service. He is required to choose, and this very choice carries with it a commitment, if he does so choose, to use what he has chosen—to put himself into it instead of letting it happen to him. Once again the counselor is saying not in words but in what she does, "This is your life, how do you want to live it?" There are many instances in which a child's behavior is such that it is not left to him to choose whether or not he will see the counselor. He may then be required to come. In those cases his choice becomes one of how he will use the time he and the counselor have together.

Morris wondered if his parents would have to know and I explained that sometime I might feel that I needed to speak with his parents, but that if that time came, we would consider the matter together. Morris decided to give it a try because "things can't go on as they are".

I explained that his request was unusual; that Latin and shop carried two different kinds of credit; and I wondered what had prompted his request. Morris is not getting along well in Latin; he has had a reputation as a good student and has lost it; the teacher is no good. As I turned the pages of his class book, he knew the other children got along well in there. They learn from this teacher. I wondered why he was taking Latin.

He didn't want to take it but his parents "in no gentle way" said he would take it. I thought maybe he didn't really want to pass it. When Morris wondered why I asked that, I thought sometimes children fought back by failing. Maybe they didn't plan to, but inside they felt, "I have to take it, but I don't have to pass it."

Morris said that he knew he had felt different in that class than anywhere else. Maybe I had something there. Maybe he was getting back at his father.

He really doesn't want to pass it and he doesn't want to try. I thought it wasn't necessary for him to pass Latin. He can live a happy life without it. However, I did remember that he had expressed some concern about his reputation as a student. Morris said that bothered him. He rather hated to lose his reputation. It seemed to me that he had a decision to make here. Which is more important to him—to show his father or to protect his reputation as a student. At this point he really didn't know, would like to think it over.

That seemed good to me but I did want him to know that maybe he could do two things—work out his problem with his father during our conferences and spend the Latin period on Latin if he decided he really wished to take it.

That was something Morris had not thought of before. He would consider it. "I've learned something about myself today," he volunteered; "I've been having a fight with my father when he isn't here." I thought he sounded a bit dissatisfied with that and Morris was sure of it. He felt a little cowardly, he said.

When I wondered when he would like to come again, the boy said, "the sooner the better. Now that I've started I want to get this thing settled. How about tomorrow?" I agreed and gave him an appointment for tomorrow.

When Morris asked whether his parents would have to know, the counselor makes no false promise that this will be kept a secret. She lets Morris know that she may be speaking to his parents, but that Morris will be included in any consideration of that step. It is on such frankness that a relationship of trust is built. Morris' parents have a right as parents to be part of what happens to their son in school, but Morris will never be left outside of such an important aspect of his own life. When Morris decides to "give it a try, because things can't go on as they are" he is taking the responsibility for working out his own destiny in school instead of fighting school or dumping his problem and expecting someone else to resolve it. The counselor helps him to assume his own part in his failure by saying, "I thought maybe he really didn't want to pass it." If Morris can own his part in failing, his will-to-fail, he comes into possession of his will itself, which he can then use in a positive way, to succeed, if he so chooses. The counselor helps him to separate his wish to get back at his father through failure in Latin from his own wish to do well in school. He is given a place to work on his relationship with his father (in interviews with the counselor) insofar as it is affecting his school work. His setting of the time for the next appointment, at the end of the interview, is the final affirmation of his decision to do something about his problem through a sustained relationship with the counselor.

This was just one brief interview, yet in it a frightened boy who was making a school decision out of line with his own real interests and

ability, and so against his own growth, was helped to find and experience the self that could look at what he was doing and take responsibility for himself in a relationship with an adult, with less fear and more trust than he had yet been able to experience. Only a counselor who believed in growth and who knew how, in what she did with Morris, to help a boy experience growth through working on a specific in his immediate school situation—in this instance, his choice of curriculum—could have helped in this way.

Morris had nine interviews with the counselor following this one. He passed his Latin at the end of the year with an average grade. There were ups and downs in what he did with the counselor and in what he did in the classroom. The climax came after the counselor let him feel the impact of what his clowning behavior would result in—a referral to the discipline chairman.

Morris asked what the discipline chairman would do; I couldn't say. It would depend on what he thought was right. I thought that Morris had to understand that while we had been working on a problem that seemed pretty hard, yet the school could not tolerate this kind of behavior. I explained that I do not deal with matters of discipline and that I would have to say to his teacher that further difficulty of this sort would have to go through proper channels. Morris sat perfectly quiet for what seemed a long time to me. Finally he stood up and said quietly, "I guess it's up to me." I was sure that was the way it was. He started to leave the office, then stopped. Well Mrs. M., I guess the next time you want to see me you will send for me. I replied that I guessed it was the other way around. The next time he wished to see me, he would stop for an appointment. Morris seemed to accept that and replied simply, "All right."

Any brief use of case material leaves the way open for a sense of slightness in what was accomplished. It is impossible in this paper to write on all aspects of counseling as a school adjustment service, or to analyze in any detail the nature of the process through which a school child can be helped to use the school for his own growth. The single point that I have tried to make is that adjustment services, school counseling or any other adjustment services, will work best if they are based on a philosophy of growth, if they function with a recognition of the growth principle active in every girl and boy no matter how recalcitrant or evasive, if they operate through the medium of a relationship with a person who understands and believes in growth, and who can put himself and his skill at the service of a child seeking however blindly or awkwardly, to achieve it for himself.

## AN INTERPRETATION OF THE VISITING COUNSELOR SERVICE TO NEW TEACHERS<sup>1</sup>

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There is a similarity in the philosophies and objectives of teachers and visiting counselors<sup>1</sup>. This is evident in our belief that the child should be considered as a whole, that he must have satisfactions in all areas of living, at home, at school, and in the community. The various phases of his being cannot be departmentalized. His educational, physical, emotional and social problems are all interdependent. A failure or acute problem in one area of his being may cause an imbalance in his total adjustment. Our objectives are really the same; that is, we want children to be able to make good use of school. These similarities also include our recognition that children are different because of heredity. They have had life experiences, the combinations of which are uniquely their own. They have different sets of parents who have different characteristics and different cultural patterns, different abilities. Children in the same families frequently are quite different. They are different within the same family because they have a different place in the family; their relationship to their parents may have developed differently. Their feelings about their brothers and sisters and their experiences with them are important in their development. Have they been in conflict with them? Have they been in unnatural competition with them? What are their feelings? In their first years of growing up, have these children had the experience of having people like them? Or have they found that they were in the way and at times only tolerated? Have they had simple experiences of success that make them confident in themselves, that make them willing to try new experiences, that make them unafraid of things that are not completely familiar to them? What has their experience with authority been: has it been a just authority; has it been inconsistent, or has it been sporadic and ineffective? This is particularly important because at school children have to learn to relate to a new kind of authority, a new person in an authoritative position. They have to learn to live within new limitations and regulations that are so neces-

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<sup>1</sup> *Visiting counselor* is the term used in the state of Illinois to designate the *school social worker*.

sary in the school situation. Are children secure enough to meet these many new experiences and take them in their stride?

Because children are unique and different, we all recognize that they have needs that are different. Their emotional needs are different; their learning needs are different. These are not two separate and distinct things, but are so intertwined and interrelated that they affect each other. Present day schools recognize a responsibility to meet these needs through good curriculum planning, through understanding children and their development, and through good teaching in the classroom. Occasionally we find a child who has had a combination of experiences which makes it difficult for him to utilize school. Although the visiting counselors are interested in all children, they do have a special concern for those who don't seem to fit, for those who are having unusual and persistent difficulties in their school experiences. These are troubled children—children who are unhappy; their problems are frequently similar to those other children have, are an accentuation of those common to most children. These children whose emotional and social needs are so intense represent a small segment of the school population with which the counselor works. You, the teacher, believe in giving the child work he is able to do, work which will give him satisfaction through achievement. In fulfilling his emotional and social needs too, he has to be met at his level of development and at his point of need. This involves the extra help that the visiting counselor may be able to give. We recognize that the unacceptable behavior of a disturbed child is the symptom of a faulty adjustment. Each age brings new experiences which means that there is a constant adjustment and changing that the child has to undergo. It is these changes that may cause a "grinding of the gears." Some people are able to shift smoothly. Others are never quite able to shift without jerking or grinding or are able only to do it after much practice and help. There are still others that get along fairly well most of the time but occasionally under tension or stress find that they almost "strip the gears." So we find children who need constant help. We find some who need help just to shift the gears. Perhaps these children are feeling that they have temporarily lost control of the situation. Some need help recurrently. They are the ones who never shift easily. When there is a frequent recurrence of this need, one begins to wonder if these are the children who need continuous and sustained help.

How do we know who these children are? We recognize them by symptoms which they show, sometimes very early in their school career. Teachers are in an unusually good position to observe and recognize

symptoms which may at first be seen only as "naughtiness," but which, if they persist, are the danger signals, the red lights that indicate that a child needs help. Sometimes this deviate behavior is the child's way of asking for help. It is his way of letting you know that all is not well with him, sometimes because of what is happening in his environment, sometimes because of his feelings about things. Often he does not know what the trouble is, but he is unhappy. Often he is wretched, and since behavior is usually the result of how one feels about things, he is acting in a way that is different and unacceptable in the school situation. Perhaps because of these feelings within himself, the child is doing some of the following things: takes up all the teacher's time and attention by asking questions and having the attention centered on him; seeks the attention of the group by clowning, by bullying, by bothering the other children as they are working; picks fights and shows inability to get along with his peer group on the playground. We don't mean that if a child gets in one fight that we think he is poorly adjusted, but it is the persistent occurrence of this aggressive behavior that seems to indicate that perhaps the child may need some special help. Then we have the child that seems exactly the opposite. He may be an excessive day-dreamer, not participating in classroom activities. At first, he may refuse to enter into any peer group contact, which may develop into a complete withdrawal from effort in the classroom; that is, he withdraws from learning. There are various reasons for children finding it impossible to try to be a part of what is going on in the school room. Sometimes one finds the young child who cries and resists coming to school. Is it something at school he is afraid of, or is it something at home he is fearful of leaving? The child who is showing symptoms of withdrawal may be the child who fails to come to school; his staying at home is a symptom of something that is not right in the child's life. There are also the children who are persistently untruthful, the children who steal, the children with unusual concern about sex. These are symptoms which seldom occur singly. A study of almost any situation will reveal that there may be one or a number of things which are bothering a child. The teacher has an excellent opportunity to observe evidences of neglect and mistreatment. The child who is too tired to do his school work or who frequently falls asleep in the classroom is of real concern to school people. The child who comes to school with signs of physical mistreatment can frequently not utilize the school program. We often think of this deprivation in terms of physical neglect, but there is emotional neglect that is equally serious. An emotionally neglected child often shows symptoms such as aggressiveness, a desire to fight, or perhaps will be

withdrawn and feel that the less he does to call attention to himself, the less trouble he will get into.

Many of the symptoms I have mentioned lead us into the consideration of family relationships which are so important in a child's early developmental years. Some symptoms may indicate that there is something within the child himself that is causing him to react in an unacceptable manner, but we also recognize that somewhere outside the child there is cause for this behavior. It is our job to help determine the reason for this trouble and to help the child cope with his feelings about it. Sometimes we, with the help of many people within the child's orbit, can change conditions. Perhaps something can be changed in the home. Perhaps something in the school situation can be changed. Perhaps the services of another agency can be enlisted. Often, however, there is a limit as to what may be effected. Then it becomes necessary to help the child to recognize and accept his own feelings, to give him a chance to talk about his problems, to accept his feelings and problems as being important to him, to give him a relationship upon which he can depend. We may be able to show him how he can find ways that he can manage and control his behavior, and give him aid in achieving this so that he can manage his affairs in a way that is acceptable in the group situation. We have a joint responsibility to help children to have a belief in themselves and their own worth, to have an acceptance of themselves as they are. Children have to be given a chance to enter actively into work on their own problems. We often meet children who find their greatest acceptance in the school setting. They have some of their best experiences in school. They are lost when school is out. They need the routines and regulations of the school, the security it offers. We believe that a good experience in one area helps an individual to better adjust to a difficult situation in another. Through the individual interview with the child, the visiting counselor attempts to help him look at his problems honestly and objectively and to work out some way that he can cope with the situation. Since each child's problem requires that this be done in a different way, there is no definite point at which to begin. However, we do usually try to take the current difficulty and work with it, bringing in other factors as that seems necessary. Because behavior patterns and attitudes have been formed over a period of years, they are not altered by telling the child they are wrong. It takes long and patient work with the child by all concerned to enable him to change. Change is slow.

Some of these things we have been discussing indicate the follow-

ing: the child is the focus of our work; whatever the problem is, it is his own problem, therefore we feel direct help is necessary. That is why we have interviews with the child. You, the teacher who has him five or six hours a day have much to offer him in his day by day experiences. When we are working with a child, we know it is important to keep in touch with you to find out what is happening in the classroom or on the playground. In turn, we should make available to you our observations and findings that are pertinent to your understanding and work with the child in the classroom. This is a team relationship. You bring your skills to the situation. We bring a different set of skills to it. By the integration of these skills and efforts we hope to create something that is better for the child. In working together I think we have to recognize that there are differences in our focus. The immediate concern of the visiting counselor, despite our interest in all children, is for the individual child who is having a troubling experience that is reflected in his school behavior and achievement. Your concern, too, is for this child; but you have him in a group, which conditions the type of activity you can have with him. Your responsibility for the group cannot be sacrificed. It often comes to the point of deciding how much deviate behavior can be accepted in the group, how much can be carried out in special plans for the child within the group. The visiting counselor does not take over any of the prerogatives of the teacher or any of her responsibilities. The child's relationship with the visiting counselor will not take the place of the relationship of the child with his teacher. It is a different relationship. The services of the visiting counselor and the teacher are not parallel services, for two lines that are parallel never touch. The aim of the visiting counselor is to integrate his service with all other services in the school in order that all work more effectively in making plans for children.

We in the schools have the child six hours a day. The parents have had him six years before he came to school and currently they have him six or eight hours daily as well as on week-ends. Naturally parents provide the climate in which the child develops. It is quite necessary that we work with the parents of any child who is of special concern to us. They can help us by telling us how the child acts at home; they can tell us some of the things that have happened to him in the past; they can give us information about his development, all of which is extremely important in understanding the child. Parents who want to help their children are frequently quick to assume responsibility for what has happened to their child. Perhaps we can help them with their feelings

about what is happening to their child; they, in turn, are helpful to us. Perhaps among all of us, we can work out plans together that will be better for the child at home as well as at school. I have found that when parents realize that we come to them with an uncritical attitude that they are usually eager to share with us both information and also their anxiety about what is happening. Frequently we find that they are relieved that there is someone to whom they can relate their concern. The parents then, too, are a part of this team that is working for the good of the child. The teacher uses one method, the visiting counselor has a different skill to contribute, and the parent can help in still another way. Thus we find that it is the integration of the efforts of all these people concerned with the child that may eventually bring him to some degree of adjustment.

We have to remember also that there are degrees of adjustment and that we have to measure how the child progresses against the way the problem appeared when we first started working together. The child may never achieve what we consider a good adjustment, but it may be all that is possible for him: it may be an improvement over what we first observed. We have to be willing to take his growth slowly and to recognize that there may be setbacks. He may revert to his former annoying behavior; but if he does this less often, if we find there are greater lengths of time between these episodes and that they are less severe; then we know that the child is making progress. And when these episodes do appear, we all have to let the child know that we are not disgusted with him, that we have not lost faith in him, and that we are sorry that this has happened. We have some understanding of why it happened and he must know that we are willing and ready to pick up again and work on the problem as it seems to be affecting him at this time.

We have considered work with the child, work with the parent and the inter-relatedness of the efforts of the teacher, the parent and the visiting counselor. We also have concern for the child in the community. The visiting counselor has the responsibility of being aware of what community resources exist, what agencies can give help with the problems of families and children, and how the functions of these agencies may be related to the problem of the troubled child. It is also the responsibility of the visiting counselor to keep abreast of new resources which may be used to enrich and support good family life which is, after all, the basis for a good adjustment. Many of our children and their families are known to community agencies which are working with them in areas not directly related to the school. A correlation and intergration of these

services with those of the visiting counselor and the teacher are important. Thus, we recognize the same necessity of working together with people in the community concerning our problems as working together in the school. We cannot work on the problem of a child in a vacuum. It is true that we frequently need to work directly with the child, but we should make every effort to work together, bringing in all resources for the good of this child or this group of children, which is our common purpose.

We want to do more than eliminate symptoms of maladjustment because if that is all we do, the unsatisfactory behavior is likely to break out in some other way. These children are showing us by their behavior that they have a feeling of unsureness, that they are, at least temporarily, out of control, that they are feeling helpless. By identification in the early school years of some of the behavior symptoms mentioned, we may be able to prevent the development of full-blown problems which can be costly in so many ways to the school, to the community, and to the child himself. It is felt by many people that one of the school's great contributions to child welfare is in this early identification of problems which may enable the child to receive help at a time when it is first needed and before his poor adjustment becomes so serious a concern to the community that prolonged, expensive treatment is necessary.





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